
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/W/25/3363213

Land off Tomlins Field Road, Orcop Hill HR2 8EP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr J Hollis against the decision of the County of Herefordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 243263.
 - The appeal development is the vehicular access, gate, drive and ground works, use of site for storage of building materials, equipment and tools, tractors and implements.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The description of the appeal development differs from the application form to the decision notice. The description of development above has been taken from the application form, which adequately describes the appeal development albeit I have omitted wording that is not a description of development.
3. I visited the site and its surroundings and was able to see all I needed from public land. At my site visit, I observed that the operational development has been implemented. Whilst some development has been undertaken, this appeal is decided on the basis of the plans in front of me, and on its own merits.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed use on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The landscape character of the area surrounding the appeal site is predominantly agricultural in nature. During my site visit, I observed the views of gentle rolling hills and fields in the area. The appeal site is bounded by hedgerows with mature trees. In the wider area, a small number of farm buildings are linked by narrow winding lanes. Although the site is not situated within any landscape or ecological designation, the combination of the undulating topography, expansive agricultural fields bordered by hedgerows, and clusters of trees contributes to a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity, reinforcing the area's distinctive rural character.
6. The appellant contends that the appeal site is not highly visible from the public rights of way. However, the proposed use of site for storage of building materials, equipment and tools, tractors and implements would add clutter to what is an

undeveloped, open part of the countryside. The appellant asserts that the storage of material is an acceptable and common feature within a working rural setting. However, the appeal development before me, due to the presence of construction materials and other associated items, would introduce an industrial character that is not ordinarily expected in an agricultural landscape. As such, it would appear as a visual intrusion into the countryside and would adversely affect the area's distinctive rural character.

7. The proposed site plan indicates that new hedgerows containing more native species would be planted along the southern boundary of the site. In addition, there would be some additional tree planting and the sowing of wildflowers in the fields. Therefore, the appeal development would result in some biodiversity benefits. However, the new hedges would take some time to achieve their maturity. In addition, the existing roadside hedgerow on both sides of the access would need to be cut back to achieve the required visibility splay. Therefore, the proposed planting would not fully mitigate the harm to the rural character of the area.
8. The appellant has expressed their willingness to accept the Council's suggested condition to limit the height of the outside storage. However, the proposed use would detract from the rural tranquillity and the landscape character, therefore such a condition would not be sufficient to address the harm that I have identified.
9. I have also considered the appellant's suggestion to allow part of the scheme. However, from the information provided, it would seem the operational appeal development exists to facilitate the proposed change of use. So this does not justify permission being granted for the operational development, because it is functionally related to the proposed use. Therefore, I conclude that a split decision would not overcome the concerns that I have identified.
10. Consequently, I conclude the proposed use would have adverse effects on the character and appearance of the area. As such, in this regard, it conflicts with Policy LD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 (Core Strategy). This requires development to recognise the local distinctiveness, landscape character and beauty of the countryside and to ensure development permitted is suitable for local context. It also conflicts with Policy ORC1 of the Orcop Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2031 (ONDP), which seeks to respect the prevailing landscape character and to promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of all sites.
11. The Council referred to Policy RA6 of the Core Strategy and ORC12 of the ONDP. However, these policies support proposals to diversify the rural economy, including small-scale business enterprises, like the appeal development. Therefore, the appeal proposal, in this regard, would not conflict with these policies.

Other Matters

12. The Council do not raise objections to the proposal in terms of highway safety, parking provision, drainage, biodiversity and ecology. But the compliance with the development plan in these respects are neutral factors.
13. The proposal would result in some economic benefits, as it would support the ongoing viability of the appellant's enterprise. It may also provide storage solutions for the appellant's construction business, which would also promote sustainable

economic growth in the area. In addition, the business may continue to contribute to the construction of new dwellings in the area. Furthermore, there may also be environmental benefits, including the planting of hedgerows and wildflowers, as well as reduced travel needs for the appellant. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole, and there are no other material considerations that indicates a decision other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

O Tresise

INSPECTOR